30 minutes, temperature: 40°C) and higher quantities lead to the formation of a cellulose triacetate.

Fig. 2 shows that the reaction time should be below 1 hour and preferably of about 20 to 30 minutes in the conditions indicated in Fig. 2 (temperature and reactive quantity). For a reaction time superior or equal to about 1 hour, the esterification produces cellulose triacetate.

Both figures illustrate the production of an esterification residue which is rich in non cellulose polymers. This residue is not obtained for high purity celluloses.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please substitute claims 1-20 as originally filed, which appear on pages 14-16, with claims 1-22 as filed in the Article 34 amendment of January 23, 2001. The pages containing claims 1-22 are marked "AMENDED SHEET" and are attached hereto. Following the insertion of claims 1-22, please amend these claims as follows:

Please amend claim 5 as follows:

5. (Amended) Process according to claim 3, characterized in that, at the step (vii), the blend is put at a temperature of about 4°C for about 16 hours.